Creation of Kamatapur Pradesh

†285. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a demand has been raised since 1952 for the creation of a separate Kamatapur Pradesh with the inclusion of five undeveloped and backward districts namely, Kooch Bihar, Jalpai Guri, Maldah, West Dinajpur and Murshidabad of North Bengal;

(b) if so, the complete details thereof;

(c) what sepcial efforts have been made or is being made by Government for the development of this neglected area having a population of 1.25 crores;

(d) whether Government are considering over the formation of an autonomous council for this area; and

(e) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) The Government is aware of the movement for the formation of a separate state of Kamatapur comprising Cooch Bihar, Jalpai Guri, Malda, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Darjeeling districts.

(c) According to the Government of West Bengal, various measures have been taken for the development of North Bengal. A Medical College, an Engineering College and a University have already been set up. A number of industrial growth centres, sports stadia and cultural centres have come up in different districts of North Bengal. The work relating to upgradation and modernisation of some existing Primary Health Centres has been taken up. The Teesta Canal Falls Hydro Electric Project has been implemented at a cost of Rs. 527.69 crore. Numerous schemes for the development of rural infrastructure are being implemented. Land reforms have been carried out in the State, including North Bengal.

(d) and (e) There is no proposal under the Government's consideration to set up an Autonomous Council for North Bengal. The Government of West Bengal has informed the Central Government that it is actively considering the formation of a separate development agency, namely, North Bengal Development Board, for the development of this Region.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.